

Message Text

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17
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2400
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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TAGS: PINS, RP, US
SUBJECT: EXPULSION OF AP BUREAU CHIEF

REF: MANILA 16971-C; MANILA 17188-C

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MARCOS GAVE ENDORSEMENT TO A LENGTHY
REPORT FROM IMMIGRATION COMMISSIONER EDMUNDO REYES
JUSTIFYING EXPULSION OF AP BUREAU CHIEF ZEITLIN, ACCORDING TO
NEWSPAPER REPORTS SUNDAY. REYES REPORTED REVIEW OF ZEITLIN'S
ACTIVITIES "PROVIDED INCONTROVERTABLE EVIDENCE OF ACTS INIMICAL
TO THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY AND INJURIOUS TO THE PRESTIGE OF
THE REPUBLIC TO THE EXTEND OF ENDANGERING NATIONAL SECURITY AND
PUBLIC ORDER." THE REPORT ALSO REFERS TO A "SEPARATE BRIEF"
NOT MADE PUBLIC WHICH IS "CONSOLIDATION OF THE FINDINGS OF
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND
THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND THE COMMISSION'S OWN
FACT-FINDING TEAM." AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT AND REPUTED RIVAL
FOR INFORMATION SECRETARY POST J.V. CRUZ QUOTED CALLING
ZEITLIN "AGENT PROVOCATEUR" DELIBERATELY TRYING TO INFLAME ARAB
RESENTMENT. MEDIA CAME OUT WITH NUMEROUS EDITORIALS AND
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COMMENTARIES UNANIMOUS IN SUPPORT OF EXPULSION. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MORNING SUNDAY, NOV 7, DAILIES CARRIED FULL TEXT OF REYES' REPORT, PRESIDENT MARCOS' LETTER TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION, AND ASSOCIATION'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN TO PRESIDENT, TOGETHER WITH COMMENTS OF AMBASSADOR CRUZ.

2. PARTIAL TEXT OF PRESIDENT MARCOS' LETTER TRANSMITTED TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT'S ASSOCIATION, ALONG WITH REYES' REPORT, FOLLOWS:

"...I QUITE UNDERSTAND THE GRAVE CONCERN OF THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEMBERSHIP CONCERNING THE RECENT ACTION OF THE COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION TO DENY MR. ZEITLIN OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS ENTRY INTO THE PHILIPPINES...

"...IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMMISSION'S REPORT, SUBSTANTIVE REASONS THAT LED TO THE ACTION AGAINST MR. ZEITLIN RELATE TO ACTIVITIES THAT ENDANGER THE SECURITY AND PRESTIGE OF OUR COUNTRY AND LIE BEYOND THE NORMAL BOUNDS OF UNIMPEDED FREEDOM WHICH IS GUARANTEED TO INTERNATIONAL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES WORKING IN THE COUNTRY.

"MAY I STATE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEMBERS THAT THIS ACTION IN NO WAY INFRINGES UPON THE FREEDOM OF THE JOURNALIST TO INVESTIAGE AND REPORT EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY TAKE PLACE IN THE COUNTRY."

3. FOLLOWING REPRESENTAS ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF REYES' REPORT ON ZEITLIN CASE. WE HAVE OMITTED REPETITIVE PORTIONS OF TEXT WHICH STATETHAT INVESTIGATIONS SHOWED ZEITLIN'S REPORTS FALSE, AND THAT HE REFUSED TO RETRACT:

"...THE ACTION OF THE COMMISSION WAS THE RESULT OF A LONG PERIOD OF STUDY AND REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF MR. ZEITLIN IN THE PHILIPPINES, WHICH PROVIDED INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE OF ACTS INIMICAL TO THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY, ARE INJURIOUS TO THE FREE STATE OF THE REPUBLIC, TO THE EXTENT OF ENDANGERING NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER... LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE COMMISSION FOUND CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE THAT OVER THE PAST TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS, MR. ZEITLIN HAS HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE COUNTRY WHO SECRETLY OR OPENLY WORK FOR THE VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, THAT HE HAS LENT THE PRIVILEGES OF HIS OFFICE AS A CONDUIT FOR DISTORTED REPORTS ON CONDITIONS AND EVIDENCE IN THE COUNTRY DESIGNED TO INCITE INTERNATIONAL ACTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, AND THAT HE HAS USED

HIS WIRE SERVICE REPORTS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS TO MOUNT THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FILIPINO PEOPLE.

"THE SAME REPORTS LIKEWISE GIVE VERY STRONG GROUNDS TO BELIEVE THAT MR. ZEITLIN IS WORKING FOR A FOREIGN ORGANIZATION OR ORGANIZATIONS OTHER THAN THE LEGITIMATE MEDIA ORGANIZATION HE WORKS FOR, AND THIS HAS LED HIM TO AGITATE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT FAR BEYOND THE MISSION OF A JOURNALIST TO REPORT THE NEWS FACTUALLY TO HIS READERS.

"DETAILS OF THIS INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT ARE PROVIDED IN A SEPARATE BRIEF, WHICH IS A CONSOLIDATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AGENCY, THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND THE COMMISSION'S OWN FACT-FINDING TEAM.

"DURING HIS TRIPS TO AND FROM ABROAD, MR. ZEITLIN HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES THAT OPENLY WORK FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, AND THERE IS DOCUMENTED INFORMATION THAT HE HAS SUPPLIED THESE ARTICLES WITH DISTORTED AND FALSE "EXPOSES" ON CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY AND LIKEWISE BROUGHT TO THE COUNTRY INFLAMMATORY LITERATURE EMANATING FROM THESE GROUPS....

"IN ADDITION, HE HAS CAUSED THE PUBLICATION HERE AND ABROAD (NOTABLY THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES PUBLISHED IN THE COUNTRY AND THE PHILIPPINE NEWS PUBLISHED IN THE US) VARIOUS ARTICLES, MANIFESTOS, AND REPORTS AUTHORED BY PERSONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OVERTLY ADVOCATING THE VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT.

"THE REPORTS WHICH MR. ZEITLIN HAS FILED FROM MANILA REVEAL A CONTINUOUS AND UNIFIED PATTERN OF DISTORTION AND FALSEHOOD, DEALING EXCLUSIVELY AS THEY DO WITH ALLIED EVENTS, SOWING CHAOS AND DISTURBANCES IN THE COUNTRY AND CONVENIENTLY AND OVERTLY IGNORING MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES CONCERNING THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE. SEVERAL OF THESE REPORTS BEAR SINGLING OUT BECAUSE THEY RESULTED IN FACT IN UNDUE APPREHENSION ABROAD ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES, EVEN WHILE SUBSEQUENT VERIFICATION REVEALED THESE REPORTS TO BE UNFOUNDED AND FALSE.

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"AS EARLY AS 1974, IT WAS MR. ZEITLIN WHO REPORTED THROUGH THE ASSOCIATED PRESS THAT THERE WERE CASES OF "GENOCIDE" IN MINDANAO. HIS REPORT UNDULY MALIGNED THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT ABROAD AND INVITED CRITICISM AND ALARM AMONG THE ARAB NATIONS AND THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES IN MINDANAO.

".IN A DISPATCH DATED 24 OCTOBER 1974, MR. ZEITLIN REPORTED THAT SOME 300 MUSLIM MEN ROUNDED UP BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES DISAPPEARED WHILE IN MILITARY CUSTODY IN THE MALISBONG MOSQUE IN PALIMBANG, SULTAN KUDARAT; THAT A RELIGIOUS MISSIONARY ACTUALLY SAW THE KILLING BY UNIFORMED MEN ON 24 SEPTEMBER 1974; AND THAT 500 MOTHERS AND 2,333 CHILDREN IN TWO EVACUATION CENTERS IN SULTAN JUDARAT WERE STARVING TO DEATH, WITH TWO TO THREE PERSONS DYING EVERY DAY...

"ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, MR. ZEITLIN SOUGHT TO AGITATE AND INFLAME THE LABOR AND STUDENT SECTORS OF THE COUNTRY. AT STUDENT CONVOCATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES ON 12 SEPTEMBER 1976 HE PUBLICLY MALIGNED THE MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE PRESS. DURING A SERIES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRIKES AT THE AG & P EARLY THIS YEAR, HE OPENLY
ENCOURAGED THE STRIKERS TO TEST THE GOVERNMENT BAN ON
STRIKES AGAINST KEY INDUSTRIES....

"IN SEVERAL OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE LABOR DAY
DEMONSTRATIONS HELD AT THE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY LAST MAY 1,
THE PLAZA MIRANDA RALLY ON 10 OCTOBER 1976 AND THE
RALLY AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ON SAN MARCELINO ST. ON
16 OCTOBER 1976, HE CLEARLY EXCEEDED THE BOUNDS OF
JOURNALISTIC DUTY, ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY
OF FELLOW-JOURNALISTS, WHEN HE TRIED TO FIRE UP THE
DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

"IT IS NOT FOR THE COMMISSION TO DETERMINE THE
BOUNDS OF PRESS FREEDOM IN THE COUNTRY. BUT WHEN A
FOREIGN NATIONAL ENTERS THIS COUNTRY, WHETHER HE IS A JOUR-
NALIST OR NOT, AND OPENLY AGITATES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT,
WHEN HE USES THE PRIVILEGES OF THE PRESS TO
UNDERMINE THE PRESTIGE OF THE NATION ABROAD, AND GIVES AID
AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO EITHER USE OR ADVOCATE VIOLENCE
IN SEEKING THE OVERTHROW OF THE GOVERNMENT, THIS IMPUGNS,
IN THE VIEW OF THE COMMISSION, UPON THE HOSPITALITY OF THE
COUNTRY AND VIOLATES THE CUSTOMS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL.
IT DOES BECOME A MATTER OF SERIOUS PUBLIC DUTY TO REVIEW
AND ASSESS THE REAL DANGERS SUCH A GUEST MAY POSE THE
NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER.

"THEREFORE, MINDFUL OF ITS DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS TO
THE NATION CONCERNING THE ENTRY OF FOREIGN NATIONS (SIC)
INTO THE COUNTRY, THE COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION AND
DEPORTATION DECIDED TO DENY MR. ARNOLD ZEITLIN ENTRY TO
THE PHILIPPINES."

4. PARTIAL TEXT OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION'S LETTER
TO PRESIDENT, SENT PRIOR TO REYES' REPORT FOLLOWS:

"THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION OF THE
PHILIPPINES MET THIS MORNING AND THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
VIEWS WITH THE STONGEST CONCERN THE ACTION TAKEN AGAINST
MR. ARNOLD ZEITLIN, MANAGER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANILA BUREAU.
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"WE ARE GLAD TO NOTE THAT YOUR OFFICE HAS PROMPTLY
INITIATED AN INQUIRY INTO THE MATTER, WHICH HAS

PARTICULARLY DISTURBED US DUE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S OFF-STATE POLICY OF ALLOWING INTERNATIONAL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS UNIMPEDED FREEDOM IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES.

5. ALL THREE MAJOR SUNDAY PAPERS REPORTED ON PRESS CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT J.V. CRUZ, FORMER NEWSMAN AND PRES. MAGSAYSAY'S PRESS SECRETARY. AS NOTED IN REFTEL, AMB. CRUZ HAS LONG BEEN MENTIONED AS CANDIDATE TO REPLACE CURRENT INFORMATION SECRETARY TATAD. CRUZ WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE FOLLOWED ZEITLIN'S REPORTS CLOSELY FROM CAIRO AND "I HAVE IN FACT RECOMMENDED TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES TO EXPEL HIM." ZEITLIN, HE SAID, IS AN "AGENT PROVOCATEUR WHO HAS BEEN GUILTY OF WRITING A CONTINUAL STREAM OF STORIES ALLEGING DEPREDATIONS COMMITTED AGAINST THE ARAB MUSLIMS BY GOVERNMENT FORCES....TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE ARAB WORLD." HE SAID,

"THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN WAS BEING CARRIED OUT BY HIM TO INFLAME MUSLIM AND ARAB WORLD AGAINST OUR GOVERNMENT."

6. EDITORIALS IN THE BULLETIN TODAY AND THE TIMES JOURNAL ON MONDAY GAVE FULL SUPPORT TO THE OUSTER, REPEATING REYES' CHARGES AND EMPHASIZING NATIONAL SECURITY. THE TIMES JOURNAL BETRAYED ITS CONCERN OVER FOREIGN REACTION, SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PATIENCE IN WAITING SO LONG BEFORE OUSTING ZEITLIN WAS "UNDERSTANDABLE." "FOR ZEITLIN," THE PAPER SAID, "IS A JOURNALIST FROM THE WESTERN PRESS AND ANY MOVE TO OUST HIM COULD BE MISINTERPRETED AS A CURTAILMENT OF PRESS FREEDOM." BUT THE TJ EMPHASIZED, ZEITLIN WAS PUNISHED FOR ACTIVITIES "OUTSIDE AND BEYOND HIS CALLING AS A JOURNALIST," SO...."ANY ATTEMPT BY THE WESTERN PRESS TO CAPITALIZE...WOULD BE SIMPLY LAUGHED OFF BY THOSE FAMILIAR WITH THE FACTS."

7. EXPRESS COLUMNIST TEODORO VALENCIA, WHO HAS SERVED AS CHIEF POT-BOILER AGITATING FOR ZEITLIN'S EXPULSION, DEVOTED A MAJOR PART OF HIS SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND MONDAY COLUMNS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE CASE. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, HE ADMITTED "ZEITLIN IS NOT A SPY...HE'S AN AGENT PROVOCATEUR, A MEMBER OF A FOREIGN LOBBY DETERMINED TO KEEP THE PHILIPPINES AWAY FROM FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ARAB WORLD...THERE'S A FEW MORE OF ZEITLIN'S GANG IN TOWN. THEY'RE ALSO CALLING THEMSELVES CORRESPONDENTS...WHO'S IN THE SAME CAUSE, AS DEDICATED TO DESTROY THE PHILIPPINE-ARAB GOOD RELATIONS. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT CAUSE COULD BE."

8. WHILE APOLONARIO BATALLIA OFFERED A RATHER PRO-FORMA EFFORT AT ENDORSING REYES' DECISION, FELLOW BULLETIN COLUMNIST JESUS

BIGORNIA SCORED A POINT, COMMENTING: "IT IS FORTUNATE THE UNITED STATES HERE FILED NO PROTEST IN BEHALF OF THE EXPELLED NEWSPAPER MAN... IT MAY BE APROPOS AT THIS POINT TO RECALL THAT MANY FILIPINO NEWSPAPERMEN WITH LIBERAL LEANINGS HAVE BEEN DENIED VISAS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES."
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COMMENT: WHILE THE HEAT IS BEING KEPT ON BY THE RUMOR MILLS AND BY VALENCIA, THE PRESIDENT SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO REASSURE THE WORLD THAT THE OUSTER WAS AN ISOLATED CASE AND CANNOT BE READ AS A THREAT TO PRESS FREEDOM. FOR EVEN AS HE ENDORSES THE EXPULSION, THE PRESIDENT REITERATES HIS GUARANTEE OF "UNIMPEDED FREEDOM" TO INTERNATIONAL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS. CERTAINLY A POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN MALACANANG IS INDICATED, AS SECRETARY TATAD REMAINS PUBLICLY SILENT ON THE WISDOM OF EXPULSION WHILE RIVAL CRUZ GLOATS.

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